

Montana Comprehensive Fish & Wildlife Conservation Strategy

What is a wildlife action plan?

Congress asked each state to develop a wildlife action plan, known technically as a comprehensive wildlife conservation strategy. These proactive plans examine the health of wildlife and prescribe actions to conserve wildlife and vital habitat before they become more rare and more costly to protect.

Montana snapshot

With over 90 million acres of land, 40,000 lakes or ponds, 98,000 miles of named streams and rivers, Montana has been tagged "The Last Best Place." Over 600 vertebrate species are known to exist across Montana's diverse landscapes, ranging from forest-covered mountains in the west, to grasslands and sagebrush in the east. Montana's hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities are the basis of many outdoor traditions, and the reasons why people call Montana home or return time and time again to visit the state's natural places.

they live. The strategy sets out to identify critical habitats for both species in need of conservation and species that are doing well. The strategy consists of four



Grizzly Bear Family /MT FWP

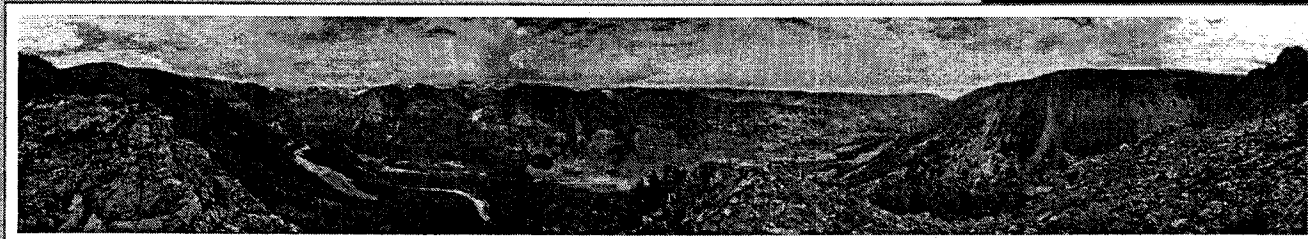
Montana's planning approach

Montana's Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy is an extensive analysis of more than 600 species of birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians, and mussels along with the places

components: geographic focus areas, fish and wildlife community types, species of greatest conservation need, and species in need of inventory. Focus areas have been identified as geographic starting points for Fish, Wildlife and Parks and partners to direct combined efforts to conserve

"A collaborative approach to conservation will ensure future generations of Montanans a diverse landscape rich in fish and wildlife, as well as the preservation of our outdoor traditions."

*—Montana Governor
Brian Schweitzer*



Panoramic/Carl Heilman

Montana's community types and species in greatest conservation need.

Primary challenges to conserving wildlife in Montana



Pygmy Rabbit - Tier I species/MT Natural Heritage Program, C. Currier

Montana's action plan identifies conservation concerns for all components of the strategy: 30 focus areas, seven community types, and 60 species in greatest conservation need.

Each conservation concern identified has at least one or multiple conservation strategies accompanying it that could be implemented on the ground. The hope is to put the strategies into action in cooperation with conservation organizations, landowners, and others, to address the conservation concerns

proactively before they become an issue requiring regulatory action.

Working together for Montana's wildlife

An advisory group consisting of state and federal agencies, tribes, industries, conservation organizations and other interest groups met in 2003 to discuss the development of Montana's action plan. These groups, along with all Fish, Wildlife and Parks staff and the general public were involved in review of the draft action plan before it was submitted for federal approval. Seven meetings were held around the state during the summer of 2005 to review the draft strategy and provide comments. About 45 people attended, representing more than 25 different organizations, along with private landowners and interested citizens. Web pages were developed with online comment forms to facilitate action plan review as well. Comments were received on all sections of the draft action plan.

Wildlife	Total number of species	Species of conservation concern*	Species of conservation concern that can be hunted or fished	Threatened/endangered
Mussels/crayfish	8	1	0	0
Fish	87	17	9	3
Amphibians	18	3	0	0
Reptiles	17	5	0	0
Birds	398	19	2	4
Mammals	108	15	1	4
Totals	636	60	11	11

* Each state is using its own criteria for this category. Montana prioritized its species component into four tiers based on level of conservation need. The species of conservation concern as noted above are Tier I species, considered in greatest conservation need. Tier II species are in moderate conservation need, Tier III are in lower conservation need, and Tier IV species are non-native, incidental, or periphery species.

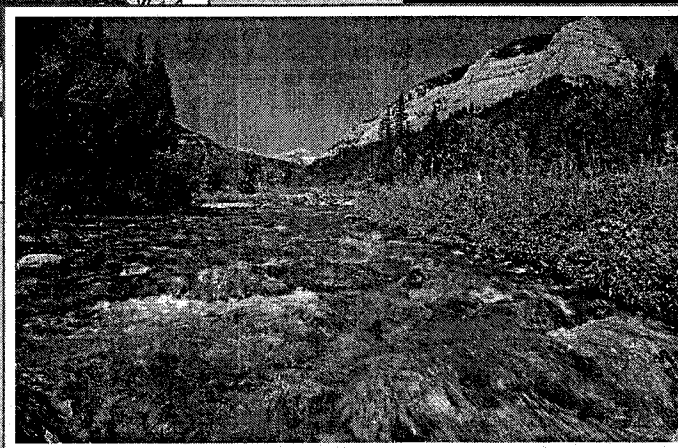
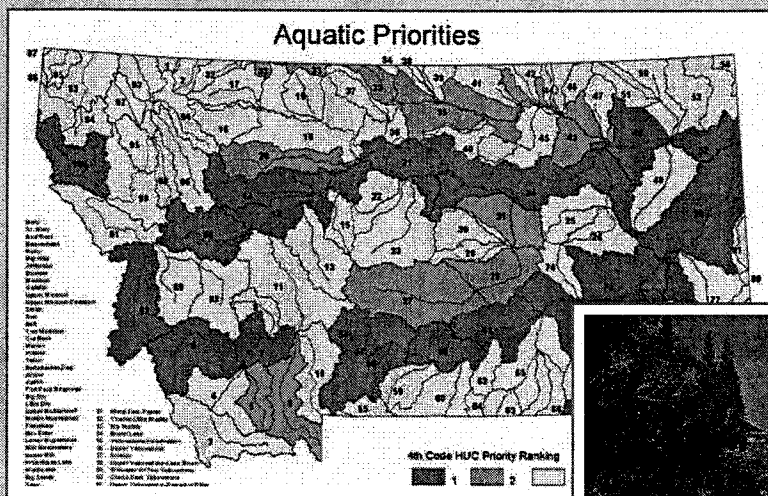
Wildlife highlights



Panoramic/Carl Heilman

Highlight habitats	Wildlife (examples)	Issue (examples)	Action (examples)
Grassland Complexes Community Type	Northern Leopard Frog, Smooth Greensnake, Greater Sage Grouse, Black-footed Ferret	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread of noxious weeds and non-native plants, especially knapweed, leafy spurge and cheatgrass • Loss of natural fire disturbance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent the introduction and spread of noxious weeds on existing tracts of palouse prairie. • Maintain the appropriate native species composition using resource management strategies. • Work with public and private activities to re-establish natural fire regime.
Riparian and Wetland Community Type	Western Toad, Common Loon, Northern Bog Lemming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draining and conversion of wetlands to agricultural croplands and subdivisions • Loss of riparian habitat due to streamside residential development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with other groups to identify riparian areas and wetlands that are critically important to wildlife diversity and work toward protection and enhancement. • Support strategic conservation easements by conservation organizations and public agencies.
Mountain Streams	Western Pearlshell Mussel, Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Arctic Grayling, Columbia Basin Redband Trout, Bull Trout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riparian habitats effected by roads, housing development, and range and forest management practices that degrade the adjacent riparian habitat and stream channel • Entrainment of fish in irrigation diversions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support government and private conservation activities that encourage and support sustainable land management practices in riparian areas.

Recommended actions to conserve Montana's wildlife



Mountain Stream - Community Type/Carl Heilman

"Montana's Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy will help identify and prevent problems before they threaten fish, wildlife and natural places. It is preventative health care – investing in the health of species now rather than spending on recovery later. It will help keep important outdoor traditions alive and add to the quality of life for future generations."

*–Jeff Hagener, Director,
Montana Fish, Wildlife &
Parks*

The advisory group reconvened in early January 2006 to help develop selection criteria that will be applied to the action plan to determine conservation priorities for the next five years. Subsequent meetings in each region of the state will involve other partner groups and will focus on developing cooperative projects that comply with identified conservation priorities.

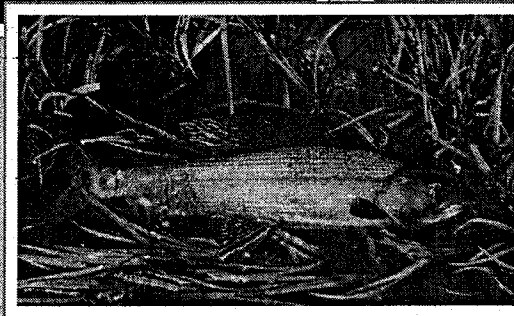
Montana FWP also developed and has begun implementing a communications plan in cooperation with groups like Montana Wildlife Federation, National Wildlife Federation, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership and others to increase awareness, understanding and involvement in comprehensive conservation.



Arctic grayling restoration
at Sun River/MT FWP



Little Elk Creek - Prairie Fish Survey/MT FWP



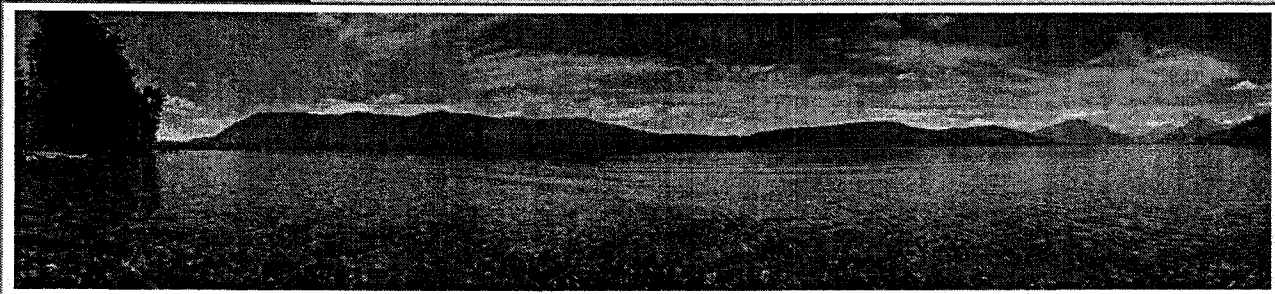
Arctic grayling - tier 1 species/MT Natural Heritage Program

Assn. of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

David Chadwick
Wildlife Diversity Associate
444 North Capitol St., NW
Suite 725
Washington D.C., 20001
Tel: 202.624.7890
chadwick@fishwildlife.org
www.teaming.com • www.fishwildlife.org

State Contact

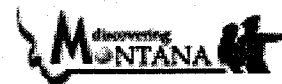
T.O. Smith, Comprehensive Conservation
Planning Coordinator
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
1420 East Sixth Street
Helena, MT 59620
Tel: 406.444.3889
tosmith@mt.gov
fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/cfwcs/



Panoramic/Carl Hellman



TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE
a natural investment



Montana State Wildlife Grant Success Stories

In the five years since its inception, the State Wildlife Grant Program has played an important role in the conservation of Montana's wildlife. The following are some projects funded through State Wildlife Grants:



*Bear-Proof Dumpster, Photo
Courtesy of Montana FWP*

Management: Proactive Measures that Benefit Wildlife and People **Bear-proofing Effort on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation**

Grizzly bears are scavengers and when they eat food from dumpsters, it can lead to conflict with humans and result in the bear either being killed or removed from its home. This State Wildlife Grant funded project, done in coordination with the nearby Blackfeet Indian Reservation, provided nine bear-proof dumpsters to keep grizzly bears out of refuse areas. By keeping grizzly bears in their natural habitat, feeding on natural foods, both grizzlies and people benefit by eliminating potential conflict situations.



*Little Elk Creek, Photo
Courtesy of Montana FWP*

Research: Gathering Information to Take Action **Finding Fish in Montana's "Fishless" Streams**

Prior to 2001, thousands of miles of prairie streams in Montana had never been surveyed for fish. These streams were thought to be fishless but recent State Wildlife Grant funded surveys have shown otherwise. Survey crews have found 48 different fish species (30 of them native) living in the "fishless" prairie streams, as well as five different amphibian species and ten different reptile species. Few suspected the streams would be so biologically rich. Now, we know that when compared to western Montana's cold-water streams, which have just a few different fish species, the state's prairie streams are hugely diverse. With more knowledge we can make better, more cost-effective decisions to conserve wildlife and the places they live for future generations.



*Grayling Restoration at Sun
River, Photo Courtesy of
Montana FWP*

Restoration: Working with Partners to Bring Back Wildlife and Natural Areas **Arctic Grayling Restoration**

The arctic grayling in the upper Big Hole River in Montana are the last river-dwelling grayling population in the lower 48 states. Efforts to restore this beautiful fish to the Beaverhead, Ruby, Sun, and Missouri rivers are now underway with the help of State Wildlife Grants. Working with local landowners and conservation groups, the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Department has been rearing and stocking grayling into the deep cold pools of Montana's rivers. This will help conserve the grayling before they become more rare and costly to protect.

**Congress has appropriated \$6.5 million in State Wildlife Grants to Montana since 2001.
This has been matched with at least \$1.4 million state and partner dollars.**

The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
444 North Capitol Street NW • Suite 725 • Washington D.C., 20001
(202) 624-7890 • www.iafwa.org • www.teaming.com

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
1420 East Sixth Street • Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-2535 • <http://fwp.state.mt.us>



FEDERAL AID APPORTIONMENTS TO MONTANA: FFY 1939 - 2006

Federal Fiscal Year	Wildlife Restoration (Pittman-Robertson)	Sport Fish Restoration (Wallop-Breaux)	State Wildlife Grants (SWG)
	P-R Amount	W-B Amount	SWG Amount
2006	\$6,280,373	\$6,862,980	\$1,063,223
2005	\$6,266,710	\$7,019,722	\$1,094,118
2004	\$5,372,411	\$6,107,345	\$1,078,493
2003	\$5,958,327	\$6,198,060	\$1,025,499
2002	\$5,168,420	\$6,841,449	\$1,367,332
2001	\$5,655,957	\$5,582,909	
2000	\$5,549,783	\$5,579,059	
1999	\$4,734,778	\$4,941,472	
1998	\$4,389,880	\$6,443,747	
1997	\$4,702,916	\$6,440,365	
1996	\$5,457,928	\$4,663,188	
1995	\$5,744,244	\$4,677,471	
1994	\$4,862,867	\$4,055,086	
1993	\$4,181,526	\$4,564,036	
1992	\$4,051,250	\$4,672,312	
1991	\$4,169,303	\$4,506,996	
1990	\$3,199,136	\$4,164,963	
1989	\$3,259,212	\$4,149,356	
1988	\$3,021,877	\$3,521,572	
1987	\$2,917,110	\$3,148,104	
1986	\$2,960,715	\$2,481,647	
1985	\$2,078,579	\$804,573	
1984	\$2,304,286	\$716,120	
1983	\$2,777,313	\$745,460	
1982	\$3,114,522	\$683,941	
1981	\$2,163,588	\$716,218	
1980	\$2,382,966	\$653,137	
1979	\$2,179,735	\$618,985	
1978	\$1,689,771	\$539,846	
1977	\$2,280,232	\$545,577	
1939-1976	\$18,902,266	1952-1976 \$4,615,747	
TOTAL:			
1939-2006	<u>\$137,777,981</u>	1952-2006 <u>\$117,261,443</u>	2002-2006 <u>\$5,628,665</u>

Based on final apportionments to Montana from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE
a natural investment

National Sportsmen's Organizations

Supporters of Teaming with Wildlife

Archery Trade Association
B.A.S.S./ESPN Outdoors
Boone and Crockett Club
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Delta Waterfowl Foundation
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
Foundation for North American Wild Sheep
Fur Takers of America
Izaak Walton League of America
National Military Fish & Wildlife Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wild Turkey Federation
North American Fishing Club
North American Hunting Club
North American Waterfowl Federation
Pheasants Forever, Inc.
Pope and Young Club
Quail Unlimited
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trout Unlimited
United States Sportsmen's Alliance
Whitetails Unlimited, Inc.
Wildfowl Trust of North America, The
Wildlife Management Institute
Wildlife Forever

Teaming with Wildlife

c/o International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
444 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 725, Washington DC 20001
Phone: (202) 624-7890 | Fax: (202) 624-7891 | teaming@iafwa.org | www.teaming.com



Conserving All Of Montana's Fish And Wildlife Species

"A thing is right only when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the community; and the community includes the soil, water, fauna and flora, as well as the people."
Aldo Leopold in "A Sand County Almanac"

The Economic Value of Fish and Wildlife in Montana

- Hunting, fishing and other forms of wildlife-related recreation add more than \$1.113 billion to the Montana economy every year. Hunting, \$422 million; fishing, \$300 million; wildlife viewing, \$391 million. 1
- Wildlife watching is the single most popular outdoors activity among Montana visitors. Of the 9.5 million visitors 2001, 36% participated in wildlife watching.
- From 1996 to 2001, wildlife recreation-related expenditures rose 50%.

Fish and Wildlife Species Management

- Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks implemented a science-based fish and wildlife restoration program in 1941, resulting in healthy populations of more than 80 hunted and fished species. 2

Montana has 12 species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act and another 556 fish and wildlife species receiving scant attention and funding to keep them from declining or even evaluate how their populations are doing.

- Of the 556 species, Montana has 60 species of greatest conservation need:
 - 17 Fish—including Yellowstone cutthroat trout and endangered pallid sturgeon
 - 15 Mammals—including lynx, hoary marmot and spotted bat
 - 19 Birds—including burrowing owl and long-billed curlew
 - 5 Reptiles—milk snake, smooth green snake, snapping turtle, spiny softshell turtle and western hognose snake
 - 3 Amphibians—boreal toad, Coeur d'Alene salamander and northern spotted frog
 - 1 Invertebrate—western pearlshell mussel

Montana Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy 3

- The Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy, completed in 2005, is the foundation for the Montana Wildlife Action Plan that identifies the on-the-ground habitat and management projects to keep the 60 species of greatest conservation need from becoming endangered and also benefits the 576 other species in Montana including those we hunt and fish for.
- Scientists, sportsmen and women, businesses, conservationists and other members of the community worked together for two years to develop comprehensive strategies to keep species from becoming endangered.

State Wildlife Grants

- State Wildlife Grants are annual federal appropriations since 2001 to state, tribal and territorial wildlife agencies to augment funding from hunting and fishing licenses and other federal aid.
- The State Wildlife Grants Program has become the nation's most cost-effective core program to keep wildlife from becoming endangered.
- Since 2001, Montana has received \$6,441,877 million in State Wildlife Grants.

2007 Federal Budget

- If the federal appropriation is raised to the \$85 million level recommended by the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, Montana would get \$1,348,251 in 2007.
- If the President's 2007 budget request for State Wildlife Grants is passed, Montana would get \$1,168,772.
- If the House bill of \$50 million prevails, Montana's apportionment would drop substantially to \$766,553 for 2007.

Montana State Wildlife Grants Contracts 5

- Small Mammal Inventory as an Indicator of Swift Fox Prey Base--Blackfeet Indian Reservation; \$324,128
- Burbot Status Assessment--western Montana; \$72,075
- Fluvial Arctic Grayling Restoration--southwestern Montana in upper Missouri River Basin; \$249,760
- Coordinated Bird Monitoring--northeastern and western Montana; \$164,650
- Bat Surveys and Conservation Plan--west-central Montana in Seeley-Swan Valley; \$82,445
- Loon Ecology--northwest Montana; \$230,790
- Status and Distribution of Species of Concern--western Montana; \$101,488
- Grizzly Bear Monitoring--western Montana in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem; \$186,473
- Bear Proof Dumpsters--Glacier and Pondera Counties; \$53,400
- Southwest Montana Native Fish Research and Conservation Program--Beaverhead and Madison Counties; \$184,942
- Rocky Mountain Tailed Frog Distribution--South Fork Flathead River Watershed; \$69,268
- Investigation of the Distribution of Sculpin Species--Columbia and Missouri River drainages; \$15,733
- Native Prairie Fish Survey and Inventory--Missouri and Yellowstone River Basins; \$622,724
- Sauger Telemetry--Powder, Tongue and Yellowstone Rivers; \$40,000
- Montana Sauger Genetic Characteristics--Missouri and Yellowstone River Basins; \$74,000
- Coordinated Bird Monitoring--northeastern and western Montana; \$164,650
- Status and Distribution of Sagebrush and Grassland Species--south-central and southeastern Montana; \$100,947
- Prairie Riparian Native Species Study--Missouri and Yellowstone River Basins; \$447,512
- Westslope Cutthroat Trout Restoration North-Central Montana--upper Missouri River Basin; \$147,395
- Fort Belknap Strategic Wildlife Management Plan--Blaine and Phillips Counties; \$15,853
- Amphibian and Aquatic Reptile Survey--eastern Montana; \$17,397
- Habitat Use and Quality for Non-Game Shrub-Steppe Birds--Carbon County; \$35,024
- Native Species Creel Census and Paddlefish Monitoring--Fergus and Phillips Counties on the Missouri River; \$42,680
- Development of Regional Prairie Dog Abundance and Distribution Goals--north-central and northeastern Montana; \$28,320
- Birds and Species of Concern Survey in Northeastern Montana--Sheridan, Daniels and Roosevelt Counties; \$174,245
- Missouri River Soft-Shell Turtle Survey--southeastern Montana in Missouri River below Fort Peck Dam to North Dakota border and lower Yellowstone River; \$74,738
- Investigation of the Distribution of Sculpin Species--Columbia and Missouri River drainages; \$15,733
- Yellowstone Corridor Native Fish--southeastern Montana between Billings and the North Dakota; \$471,940
- Sagebrush/Shrub-Steppe Ecosystem Conservation and Management Incentive Program--statewide; \$467,429
- Fish Conservation Geneticist--statewide; \$308,786
- Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan--statewide; \$875,233
- Wolf Conservation and Management Plan--statewide; \$79,280
- Small Mammal Survey and Inventory--statewide; \$324,128

The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership is a coalition of leading conservation organizations and individual grassroots partners, working together to expand access to places to hunt and fish, conserve fish and wildlife and their habitat, and increase funding for conservation and management.

Sources of Information

1. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 2003. 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. State Reports: AZ, ID, MT, NM, UT, WY. (<http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/fishing.html>)
2. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 2005. Interconnections. Issue #1.
3. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 2005. Comprehensive Fish & Wildlife Conservation Strategy. (<http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/cfwcs/default.html>)
4. Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, 2006. Administrative Report--State Wildlife Grants: Allocation of Funds at Different FY 2007 Funding Levels.
5. Mike Aderholt, Personal Communication. Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks. (406-453-2549)